

Message Text

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PAGE 01 BONN 00027 021515Z

44

ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 EA-07 ISO-00 EURE-00 SAJ-01 ACDA-05 IO-10

OMB-01 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00

NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 /083 W

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FM AMEMBASSY BONN

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 5410

INFO AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMCONSUL HONG KONG

USMISSION NATO BRUSSELS

USLO PEKING

C O N F I D E N T I A L BONN 00027

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: CH, UR, GW

SUBJECT: GERMAN REACTION TO CHINESE RELEASE OF SOVIET
HELICOPTER CREW

1. THE GERMAN PRESS HAS GIVEN SOME COVERAGE TO THE
CHINESE DECISION TO RELEASE THE SOVIET HELICOPTER CREW
AND THERE HAS ALSO BEEN SOME SPECULATION AMONG THOSE
FEW GERMAN POLITICAL OBSERVERS REMAINING IN BONN OVER
THE HOLIDAY.

2. PRESS COVERAGE HAS CONSISTED FOR THE MOST PART OF
BRIEF STORIES, OFTEN ON THE FRONT PAGE, IN THE MAJOR
NEWSPAPERS.

3. AN EDITORIAL IN THE MUNICH SUDDEUTSCHER ZEITUNG,
AFTER DESCRIBING AS VIRTUALLY INCOMPREHENSIBLE THE
CHINESE DECISION NOT ONLY TO RELEASE THE FLIERS BUT
ALSO TO RELIEVE THE FLIERS AND THE SOVIET GOVERNMENT
OF ANY SUSPICION OF HOSTILE ESPIONAGE, OBSERVED THAT THE
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PAGE 02 BONN 00027 021515Z

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE CHINESE ACTION ABPEARED DIRECTED

MORE AT WASHINGTON THAN AT MOSCOW. THE EDITORIAL SAID THAT THE MESSAGE SHOULD BE REGARDED AS A HINT AT CHINESE POLICY OPTIONS.

4. THE FRANKFURTER ALLGEMEINE OBSERVED THAT PEKING, AFTER LOOKING AT VIET-NAM, ANGOLA, AND THE CORRIDORS OF THE US CONGRESS, MAY HAVE CONCLUDED THAT AMERICA IS NO LONGER CAPABLE OF BEARING A ROLE AS A SUPPORTING PILLAR OF CHINESE POLICY AGAINST THE SOVIET UNION. IT LEFT OPEN THE QUESTION WHETHER THE CHINESE WERE SUGGESTING THAT THEY COULD REACH COEXISTENCE WITH THE SOVIET UNION, BUT OBSERVED THAT AN IMMEDIATE CHINESE PURPOSE MAY HAVE BEEN TO HAVE THE WEST POSE THIS QUESTION TO ITSELF.

5. GERMAN POLITICAL OBSERVERS, LIKE THE GERMAN PRESS, REGARD THE CHINESE DECISION AS AN IMPORTANT SIGNAL. NONE, HOWEVER, CLAIM TO BE AWARE OF ITS FULL IMPLICATIONS, AND NONE ARE SPECULATING AS TO THE EFFECT THAT A SOVIET-CHINESE RAPPROCHEMENT MIGHT HAVE ON SOVIET POLICY TOWARD GERMANY AND EUROPE.

6. ACTION REQUESTED: BECAUSE OF GERMAN INTEREST IN THIS SUBJECT, WE WOULD APPRECIATE RECEIVING ANY ANALYSIS THAT THE DEPARTMENT MAY HAVE MADE SO THAT WE MAY USE IT IN OUR CONVERSATIONS HERE.
HILLENBRAND

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